

August 2024



## Quabbin Health District Public Health Nurse Newsletter

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*Serving the towns of  
Belchertown, Pelham, and Ware*

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## Quabbin Health District News and Happenings:

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*Baystate Health Wellness on Wheels "WOW" Bus Comes to  
Ware on August 20, 2024  
from 12:00 pm – 2:30 pm  
At the United Church of Ware, 49 South Street, Ware*

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Behavioral Health Network, Inc. (BHN) has launched a Mobile Methadone Program to help those struggling with opioid use disorder. The mobile treatment unit will be parked at 75 Main Street, Ware, MA, 01082 with dosing hours Monday to Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Call 413-272-1333 for more information.

The Towns of Ware and Belchertown are hosting National Night Out for their communities on August 6, 2024. Ware is hosting at Grenville Park from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm, and Belchertown is hosting at the Chestnut Hill Community School from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. This is a free event for those who live and work in each town to meet and connect with a variety of resources and

The Quabbin Health District is presenting an educational program – "Respiratory Health: Love your Lungs!" at the Ware Family Resource Center, 82 Main Street, Ware, on August 16, 2024 at 2:00 pm. This program is free and open to the community! Please RSVP to: 413-277-6601 to attend.

The Quaboag Hills CHIP initiative is having a General Body meeting for the community to hear updates on the working groups!

Please join us on Wednesday, August 14th from 12 pm - 1:30 pm

This meeting will be on Zoom and in person at the E2E building in Ware.

Pre-registration is not required but is highly encouraged.

<https://forms.gle/XHBrL4ECwZq9UXRE8>

Lunch will be provided!

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83948348030?pwd=vfQ6jJaiwC ARm43fM8AYhf9zy564GG.1>

In-Person Address: 79 Main Street, Ware, MA 01082



## National Immunization Awareness Month

### **Did you know?** The history of vaccines dates back centuries!

Since about the 15th century, people all over the world have attempted to prevent illness by intentionally exposing healthy people to smallpox— a practice known as variolation (after a name for smallpox, ‘la variole’).

In 1796, Edward Jenner created the first successful smallpox vaccine – after discovering that people who had been infected with cowpox were immune to smallpox.

### **Reasons to get vaccinated and stay up to date with vaccines**

#### **1. Vaccine-preventable diseases have not gone away**

Viruses and bacteria that cause illness and death still exist and can be passed on to those who are unvaccinated and unprotected. While many preventable diseases are no longer common in the US, global travel makes it easy for these diseases to spread.

#### **2. Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 50,000 adults died from vaccine-preventable diseases in the US each year.

#### **3. Vaccines are safe**

The US has a robust approval process in place to ensure that all licensed and approved vaccines are safe. Potential side effects associated with vaccines are uncommon and much less severe than the diseases they prevent.

#### **4. Vaccines cannot cause the diseases they are designed to prevent**

Vaccines contain either killed or weakened viruses, making it impossible to get the disease from the vaccine.

#### **5. Vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive**

An average flu illness can last up to 2 weeks, typically with 5 or 6 missed work or school days. And adults who get hepatitis A lose an average of one month of work.

#### **6. When you get sick, your children, grandchildren, and parents may also be at risk**

Adults are the most common source of pertussis (whooping cough), which can be deadly in infants. Staying up to date on all recommended vaccines helps protect you and your family as well as those in your community who are not able to be vaccinated.

### **Is natural immunity better than acquired immunity from vaccines?**

Vaccines trigger the immune system to produce its own protection, in the same way that vaccines do. The difference is your child does not have to get sick first to develop these protective antibodies. Although natural immunity might give better immunity than vaccines do, the risks are much higher. With natural infections, a child might develop complications such as permanent brain damage, deafness, blindness, and death. On the other hand, if your child is exposed to a disease after being vaccinated, he or she would already be armed and able to fight it off with significantly low risk of complications.

# Beat the Heat

## Staying Safe in Extreme Conditions



As temperatures soar this summer, it is critical to stay informed and prepared for extreme heat conditions. Use this guide to learn more about extreme heat and find best practices for preventing and treating heat-related illnesses.

### What is Extreme Heat?

Extreme heat describes temperatures that are significantly hotter than average. Generally, this means temperatures above 90 degrees that last more than two days ([Ready.gov](#)). Some areas of the country may never hit 90 degrees this summer, but can still experience heat that feels “extreme” based on their normal weather conditions. High levels of humidity can make outdoor temperatures feel even hotter.

Extreme heat also causes stagnant air, which can lead to higher air pollution and decreased air quality. Navigating poor air quality requires taking additional precautions beyond what’s included in this guide. [Find best practices for protecting your health during periods of poor air quality in the Public Health Communications Collaborative’s “Understanding Air Quality” guide.](#)

### What Causes Heat-Related Illness?

Heat-related illness occurs when a person’s body temperature rises faster than it can cool itself down. Many factors can increase body temperature during extreme heat, including dehydration, living and working in spaces without air conditioning, and intense physical activity.

### Who is Most Affected by Heat-Related Illness?

The following groups are most likely to experience a heat-related illness during high temperatures.

- **People who work outside, kids, and athletes** are more likely to be physically active for long periods of time when it is hot outside.
- **Infants, young kids, and pets** rely on caregivers to keep them in safe temperatures during extreme heat.
- **Adults aged 60 years and older** do not adjust as well to sudden temperature changes as younger people.
- **People without air-conditioned houses or cars** are less equipped to maintain a safe temperature in their living spaces. Likewise, many people who work in places without air conditioning do high-energy tasks in extreme temperatures. For example, many factories, warehouses, and delivery vehicles do not have air conditioning.
- **People in hotter parts of the country** are exposed to extreme heat more frequently than others.
- **People with chronic health conditions** can be less likely to sense and respond to changes in temperature and more likely to take prescription medicines that impact how their body regulates its temperature and sweat.
- **People with reduced mobility and people with limited access to transportation** are less able to travel to an air-conditioned location.
- **Pregnant people’s** bodies must work harder to cool themselves and their baby. Pregnancy can also cause dehydration, which increases the risk of heat-related illness.

# Preparing for Extreme Heat

During periods of extreme heat, your body has to work harder to keep you cool. Use these tips to prepare for extreme heat and stay safe when it is hot outside.



 <b>Do</b>	 <b>Don't</b>
<p><b>Drink water</b> throughout the day—approximately 8 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes.</p>	<p><b>Don't choose sugary drinks</b> (soda, juice, sports drinks), energy drinks, or alcohol instead of water.</p>
<p><b>Take cool showers or baths</b> to reduce your body temperature.</p>	<p><b>Don't use the oven frequently</b>, as it can raise the temperature in your home.</p>
<p>Use an <b>air conditioner</b> to cool your home, if possible.</p> <p>If your home does not have air conditioning, you can <b>cover windows with drapes or shades, and add weatherproofing strips around windows to keep in cool air</b>. Close your windows when it's hotter outside than inside. If it's cooler outside and the air quality is good, <b>consider opening the windows and turning on an exhaust fan or window fan</b>, which will help remove hot air and replace it with cooler air.</p> <p><i>If you are unable to afford your cooling costs, contact the <a href="#">Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program</a>.</i></p>	<p>If possible, <b>don't rely on cooling fans as a primary cooling device</b>. They create airflow and may increase your comfort level, but do not necessarily reduce temperatures.</p>
<p>When possible, <b>stay in a cool, indoor space</b>. Identify air-conditioned places in the community, such as libraries, shopping malls, or a cooling center offered by your local public health department.</p>	<p><b>Don't do high-energy activities outdoors</b> during periods of extreme heat. If you have to be outside or work outside, try to avoid the hottest part of the day (approximately 3–4 p.m.) and take frequent breaks in the shade or in air conditioning to rest and hydrate.</p>
<p><b>Check on neighbors, older people, or loved ones</b> who may not be prepared for extreme heat conditions, or may be at higher risk for heat-related illness.</p>	<p><b>Don't leave pets or children unattended in cars</b>. If you need to take your pets outside, try to avoid dark asphalt or pavement that can burn their paws.</p>
<p>If you are outside, <b>find shade and wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothing</b>. <b>Wear a hat</b> to cover your face and head. <b>Apply sunscreen</b> with SPF 15 or higher and UVA and UVB (broad-spectrum) protection every 2 hours.</p>	<p><b>Don't use sunscreen as your only defense against extreme heat</b>. Sun protection keeps your skin safe but doesn't reduce body temperatures.</p>

# Signs of Heat-Related Illness and What To Do If You're Experiencing Symptoms

Knowing if you're experiencing the symptoms of heat-related illness—and what actions to take next—is essential to protecting your health during extreme heat.

Heat-Related Illness	Symptoms	What to Do	
MODERATE	Heat Rash	Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay in a cool, dry place and keep the rash dry.</li> <li>Use cornstarch, arrowroot powder, or oat flour to soothe the rash.</li> </ul>
	Sunburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Painful, red, and warm skin</li> <li>Blisters on the skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay out of the sun until your sunburn heals.</li> <li>Put cool cloths on sunburned areas or take a cool bath.</li> <li>Put moisturizing lotion or aloe on sunburned areas.</li> <li>Do not break blisters.</li> </ul>
	Heat Cramps	Heavy sweating during intense physical activity, in addition to muscle pain or spasms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop physical activity and move to a cool place.</li> <li>Drink water.</li> <li>Wait for cramps to go away before you do any more physical activity.</li> </ul>
SEVERE	Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating, in addition to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cold, pale, and clammy skin</li> <li>Fast, weak pulse</li> <li>Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>Muscle cramps</li> <li>Tiredness or weakness</li> <li>Dizziness</li> <li>Headache</li> <li>Fainting (passing out)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move to a cool place, loosen your clothes, and sip water.</li> <li>Put cool, wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath.</li> </ul> <p><b>Get medical help right away if you are throwing up, your symptoms get worse, or your symptoms last longer than 1 hour.</b></p>
	Heat Stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High body temperature (103°F or higher)</li> <li>Hot, red, dry, or damp skin</li> <li>Fast, strong pulse</li> <li>Headache</li> <li>Dizziness</li> <li>Nausea</li> <li>Confusion</li> <li>Losing consciousness (passing out)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Call 911 right away</b>—heat stroke is a medical emergency.</li> <li>Move the person to a cooler place.</li> <li>Help lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath.</li> <li>Do not give the person anything to drink.</li> </ul>

Source: Symptoms of Heat-Related Illnesses – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**A note about sweating:** Sweating is a common—and often normal—bodily response to exercise, physical activity, or being in hot indoor and outdoor spaces. But during periods of extreme heat, if excess sweating is paired with any other symptoms of heat cramps or heat exhaustion, pause and follow the recommendations above.

For more information, visit the following resources:

- [Protecting Against Extreme Heat: Health Action Alliance](#)
- [Check Your Local HeatRisk: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)



## Northwestern District Attorney's Office Consumer Protection Unit *Scam Alert Newsletter*



### GOVERNMENT IMPOSTER

**What to look for:** A phone call claiming to be from the Social Security Administration, IRS, Medicare, FBI, sheriff or police department. They want you to verify personal information because your Social Security number has been compromised; or you failed to report for jury duty & you need to pay a fine; or you didn't pay your taxes & they need your money now. If you don't, you will be arrested or your benefits will be taken away.

**What to do:**

- **HANG UP**
- **Look up** the number for the government agency
- **Call** the agency directly to report the call & verify the information

*Government agencies will not call you looking for money or personal information.*

### GRANDPARENT/FAMILY EMERGENCY SCAM

**What to look for:** A phone call claiming to be about or from a grandchild or other family member in distress. The caller says the situation is urgent & you need to wire money or buy gift cards to pay for bail or to help resolve the situation. They ask you not to tell their parents.

**What to do:**

- **Verify** that it is your grandchild by asking a question only your real grandchildren would know the answer to
- If you cannot easily verify it is your grandchild, **HANG UP**
- **Contact** their parents
- **Resist** pressure to send money quickly and secretly
- **Refuse** to send money through wire transfer, overnight delivery service, or buying gift cards

### CHARITIES SCAM

**What to look for:** You get a phone call or letter from a charity asking for a donation. The caller pressures you to donate now & asks for your credit card number.

**What to do:**

- **Don't** feel pressured to make a donation
- **Research** the charity – make sure it is real & something you want to donate to

### ROMANCE SCAM

**What to look for:** An on-line love interest asks you for money. You have never met, but they have an emergency & need some financial assistance or they have an investment deal too good to pass up.

**What to do:**

- **Don't** send money to someone you have never met
- **Talk** it over with a friend or family member
- **Stop** communicating with them





## Northwestern District Attorney's Office Consumer Protection Unit *Scam Alert Newsletter*



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### **BANK & CREDIT CARD IMPOSTERS**

**What to look for:** You get a call or email from your bank or credit card company stating that there is a problem with your account or a charge has been declined. You need to call now or click on a link to resolve the problem.

**What to do:**

- **HANG UP**
- **Call** your bank or credit card company directly to report the call & verify the information
- **Visit** your local bank to resolve the problem

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### **UTILITY COMPANY IMPOSTERS**

**What to look for:** A phone call or email claiming to be from your utility or cable company. They say you are behind on your payments & you need to send money now or your service will be shut off.

**What to do:**

- **HANG UP**
- **Find** your bill or statement
- **Call** the company's customer service number to verify that your account is in good standing

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### **TECH SUPPORT SCAM**

**What to look for:** You receive a call, email, or a message pops up on your computer claiming your computer has been infected with a virus or is not working properly. The caller claims that he can remove the virus or fix your computer for a fee & you need to allow him to remotely access your computer. In some cases, they steal personal or financial information on your computer to steal your money or your identity. Other times, the scam artist may attempt to install malware on your computer, allowing them to control the computer remotely, or display fake security alerts to convince you to pay for a useless service.

**What to do:**

- **HANG UP**
- **Shut down** your computer immediately
- **Run** your anti-virus program
- **Don't** let anyone have remote access to your computer
- **Take** your computer to a repair shop you trust if you believe there is a problem

*Microsoft and Apple do not monitor your computer looking for problems. They will not call you or send you an email about a virus on your computer.*

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## Northwestern District Attorney's Office Consumer Protection Unit *Scam Alert Newsletter*



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### MEDICARE/MEDICAL EQUIPMENT SCAM

**What to look for:** You get a call offering to send you a free medical alert system, a free back brace, or other medical equipment. The caller tells you they will bill Medicare and send you the equipment for free! They just need your Medicare or Social Security number in order to process your order.

**What to do:**

- **HANG UP**
- **Don't** give out personal information such as your Medicare or Social Security number over the phone
- **Beware** of "free" offers

Talk to your doctor if you think you need a brace or any medical device

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### LOTTERY & SWEEPSTAKES SCAM

**What to look for:** An unexpected email, letter or phone call from someone who claims you have won money in a lottery or sweepstakes. They ask you to send money to pay taxes, insurance or other fees to claim the winnings. They may ask for your bank account information, so your winnings can be directly transferred into your account.

**What to do:**

- **Slow down and remember:** you can't win if you didn't enter
- **Don't** give bank account information to anyone over the phone
- **Don't** send money
- **HANG UP**

*Foreign lotteries are illegal. You should never have to send money or grant access to your bank account in order to claim a prize.*

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### *Different Story, Same Old Scam*

**Scams** can involve dramatic or convincing stories to convince you to pay through money wiring service, gift cards or even by sending cash.

- Friend-in-Need Scams
- Advance Fee Loan Scams
- Apartment Rental Scams
- Online Purchase Scams
- Mystery Shopper Scams
- Overpayment Scams

**What to do:**

- **Verify** the information before you pay
  - **Don't** accept checks from someone you don't know
  - **Remember:** gift cards are for gifts not for payments
  - **HANG UP**
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## Northwestern District Attorney's Office Consumer Protection Unit *Scam Alert Newsletter*



**Don't rely on caller ID:** Criminals often use "spoofing" technology that tricks your caller ID into displaying a fake number. It may look as though the call is coming from someone in your neighborhood or from a government agency.

**Screen your calls:** If possible, send all calls you don't recognize to voice mail or let the answering machine pick up. If you accidentally pick up a call from someone you don't know, just hang up quietly.

**Report suspicious activity:** Check out an unknown company before you sign up, especially if business is done over the phone. If a caller seems suspicious, hang up & report it.

### **Stay safe on the computer:**

- Don't trust unsolicited emails
- Treat email attachments with caution & never click on links in emails unless you've verified the sender
- Install antivirus software & make sure to keep it up to date
- Filter spam messages
- Check for spelling mistakes in email addresses
- Don't call the number they give you, look it up yourself
- Never share passwords or give control of your computer to anyone who contacts you

**Keep your personal information private:** Don't share your Social Security number, Medicare number, date of birth, credit card or bank account numbers with someone who contacts you no matter who they claim to be.

**Remember that criminals try to play on your emotions:** If someone tells you to keep it a secret, rushes you or scares you, it is probably a scam. Remember, they are trying to **trick** you into sending them money!

**Payment Demands:** Criminals want easy, fast payments like money wiring, gift cards or even cash